



May 1990

Dear Champaign resident:

Illinois Power Co. is studying the extent of environmental contamination from a former gas manufacturing plant that operated at 5th and Hill Streets until the 1950s. The site is currently the location of American Legion Post #559.

A 1986 study indicated that there were cinders, coal and building debris on the surface of the property. An investigation begun late this winter has shown that there is coal tar and other residues in the soil and groundwater under the property. Some of the residues contain chemicals that are harmful if people breathe, swallow or get on their skin large amounts of them for any length of time. From the information collected so far, Illinois Power Co. has found that people's health is not presently threatened by the residues at the 5th Street site.

This month contractors hired by Illinois Power Co. will look for evidence that some of the coal tar underground may have moved away from the property. Workers will conduct a soil gas survey, using probes to sample the soil for gas vapors in areas near the site. The results of the survey will be used to design the next phase of the investigation. Some of the questions you may have are answered in the attached fact sheet.

Sincerely

Natalie E. Locke
Environmental Specialist

May 1990

**Questions and Answers
About the Investigation at the Former Gas Manufacturing Plant
5th and Hill Streets, Champaign, Ill.**

Q: Will people have to stay away from the area when the workers are doing the soil gas survey?

A: People can stay in their houses and come and go in the neighborhood during the survey. However, it will make our job easier if people, especially children, stay back from the area where the workers are taking samples.

Q: Will I have to keep the windows and doors closed while the soil gas survey is going on near my house?

A: No. The soil gas survey will not release any gases from coal tar that might be underground in the area.

Q: How long will it take to do the soil gas survey?

A: The survey will take one to two weeks.

Q: Is my water safe to drink?

A: Yes. Although coal tar was found in samples from the groundwater under the site, this groundwater is not Champaign's water supply. None of the chemicals in gas manufacturing residues were found when the water supply wells were tested.

Q: What is in the residues that makes them harmful?

A: They are mostly coal tar and oil, which are left over when gas for heating and lighting was produced from coal. The residues contain certain chemical compounds called polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH). There are hundreds of different PAH compounds, and some of them have been proven to cause cancer in test animals. A few are suspected of causing cancer in humans who were exposed to them on the job. There is no evidence that these compounds can cause cancer in the general public.

Q: What will happen next after the soil gas survey is finished?

A: Illinois Power Co. will use the information from the survey to design a more detailed investigation. The next phase will include installing groundwater

monitoring wells to collect more water samples and boring more holes for soil samples. If the soil gas survey shows that some of the coal tar has moved away from the gas manufacturing property, some of the wells and soil borings will be in the area near the site. The next phase will begin in a few months and will take six to nine months to complete.

Q: What if the investigation shows that the residues need to be cleaned up?

A: If the study indicates that there is a threat to people's health or the environment that requires the site to be cleaned up, Illinois Power Co. will study different methods to clean it up. It will then take the action necessary to remove the threat to health and the environment.

Illinois Power Co. has placed information about the environmental investigation in the Douglass Branch Library at 310 E. Bradley Ave. and the main library at 505 S. Randolph St. If you would like more information, please call "collect" to Gretchen Monti of Monti Communications, Inc. Her telephone number is 309/452-9151.